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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

Veterinary  
Services

# Consultants Provide Variety of Services

## National Swine Survey

When swine producers encounter health problems within their herd or have questions concerning nutrition, two sources are sought--veterinarians and other consultants.

According to a recent National Animal Health Monitoring System's study, three-fourths of swine producers during 1990 requested services of veterinarians while slightly less than two-thirds utilized the services of nonveterinary consultants. (Producers did not specify if they used consultants in addition to or instead of a veterinarians.)

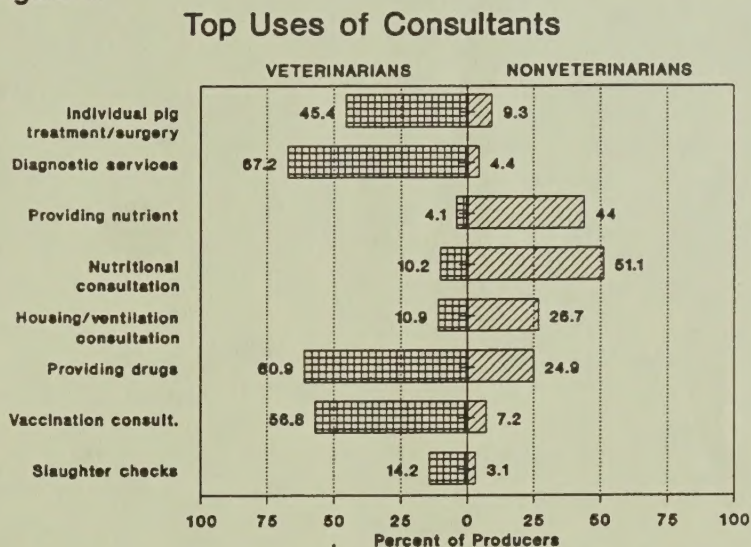
The study pointed out that during 1990 veterinarians were used primarily for diagnostic services (67 percent) and drug provision (61 percent) (Figure 1). Other areas where veterinarians were the primary source included vaccination consultation, individual pig treatment or surgery, and slaughter checks.

"The bottom line in today's environment is to make the client a more efficient producer," states Dr. Howard Hill of Iowa State University's Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Ames, Iowa.

"Veterinarians treat more than sick pigs. The progressive practitioner tries to keep healthy pigs healthy, in addition to getting sick pigs well."

Services of nonveterinary consultants were utilized in other areas, primarily nutrition and management.

Figure 1.



Forty-four percent of swine producers relied on other consultants to provide nutrient premixes, and slightly more than half asked the same resources for advice on nutrition.

Additional advice of consultants was used to answer questions about housing and ventilation as well as other management areas. While some swine producers asked the same questions of their veterinarians, other consultants were employed in the management technical arena more often than veterinarians.

Nonveterinarian personnel also proved the key source for AI work and semen collection. While neither was prominent work (5.1 percent and 1.4 percent respectively), nonveterinarians performed almost all of these two services.

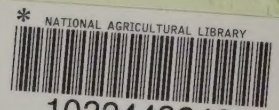
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The National Swine Survey was a cooperative effort of State agricultural departments; universities; and the following USDA agencies: Extension Service (ES), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The study of swine health and productivity was conducted from December 1989 through January 1991. The objectives were to provide information on the production and health levels of the United States' swine herd, and to suggest factors that may affect preweaning morbidity and mortality.

A statistical sample of producers from 18 States was selected to provide inferences about the nation's hog population. The resulting estimates represent 95 percent of the United States' swine population.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) selected the sample and collected retrospective data on

swine health and management practices from 1,661 farms.

Seven hundred and twelve (712) producers agreed to continue providing data to State and federal Veterinary Medical Officers (VMO's). Each farm was visited a total of four times over a 90- to 120-day period. Data collection instruments such as diary cards were implemented to collect prospective data on the farrowing to weaning stage of swine production. The producers recorded observations of clinical signs associated with illness and death in sows, gilts, and preweaning piglets.

**National Animal Health Monitoring System**  
**USDA:APHIS:VS**  
**555 South Howes, Suite 200**  
**Fort Collins, Colorado 80521**  
**(303) 490-7800**

**N100.0192**